



IEN Program Resource Advisory Council (IPRAC)

February 8, 2011 Meeting Minutes

(Approved April 12, 2011)

The February 8, 2011 meeting of the IEN Program Resource Advisory Council was held in the Barbara Morgan Conference Room of the Len B. Jordan Building, 650 West State Street, Boise, Idaho.

ATTENDANCE

Members/Alternate(s) Present:

Tom Luna, (Chair) Superintendent of Public Instruction
John Miller, Dean of Off Campus Instruction, College of Southern Idaho
Jerry Reininger, Director of Information Systems, Meridian School District
Jay Larsen, Executive Director, Idaho Technology Council
Teresa Luna, Interim Director, Dept. of Administration
Shelly Sayer, Premier Technology Inc. (VTC)
Sen. John Goedde, Chairman of Senate Education Committee
Sen. Bert Brackett, Joint Finance & Appropriations Committee
Rep. Darrell Bolz, Joint Finance & Appropriations Committee
Rep. Wendy Jaquet, Joint Finance & Appropriations Committee
Rep. Bob Nonini, Chairman of House of Representatives Education Committee

Alternate

Mike Caldwell, Idaho Digital Learning Academy

Absent Members

Sen. Shawn Keough, Joint Finance & Appropriations Committee
Cheryl Charlton, CEO, Idaho Digital Learning Academy

Others Present:

Martin Bilbao, ENA
Sally Brevick, Office of the CIO
John Cockett, Malad High School
Mike Costa, IEN
Mike Dolezal, ATC Communications
Robin Finch, Dept. of Administration
Brady Kraft, IEN
Oliver Landow, ENA
Garry Lough, IEN
Jodi McCrosky, Qwest

Sen. Mortimer
Keith Murphy, Qwest
Jerry Piper, Cambridge Telephone Co./ITA
Ken Romero, Qwest
Lincoln Smyser, ENA
Skip Smyser, ENA
Debra Stephenson-Padilla, IEN
Joel Strickler, Qwest
Mike Vance, ENA
Greg Zickau, OCIO

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

MOTION: Rep. Bolz moved and Sen. Brackett seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on December 14, 2010 as presented; the motion passed unanimously.

ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS

Greg Zickau explained that fiber-based Ethernet is the preferred technology for the IEN as it is considered the most economical and future-proof. It is also preferable that the solution be provided by the local incumbent. However, in some areas there are technologies present that are not necessarily contractually available to the State. It is hoped that new options will become available following a recent non-disclosure agreement between Qwest and Syringa and their ongoing discussions. In the meantime, schools are planning their fall schedules now and the remaining unconnected schools require a decision immediately as to whether they will be connected by that time. The Technical Advisory Committee has discussed at length the option of, for the first time, using wireless technology, the alternative being older technology with a cost difference of about \$36K/month. If the discussions between Qwest and Syringa resolve quickly, then the IEN can accept proposals from the vendor community so that these schools can be connected by fiber-based Ethernet.

Questions and Discussion

Dr Miller commented that the IEN needed to aggressively pursue the rollout commitment in order to fulfill promises made to provide the same opportunities for all, whilst knowing that there may be emerging technologies that could perform better. Dr Reininger reiterated that schools were planning their fall schedules and registration now and noted that, for some of the schools in question, there was no alternative option to wireless. Mike Caldwell queried the reliability of wireless. Mr Zickau responded that the pros and cons of wireless had been considered by the Technical Advisory Committee and it would not have been considered if there had been any question about it meeting the requirements of the IEN.

EDUCATION REFORM

Supt. Luna commented on the critical role that the IEN will play in the technology component of the “Students Come First” legislation. The IEN provides the ability to harness the learning opportunity that the new legislation will bring about for high school students, including the possibility for each high school student to have a mobile technology device. Some of the high school learning will transition to content that is online and the IEN makes this possible.

Questions and Discussion

Senator Brackett commented that this message was not being as widely disseminated as it needed to be. Supt. Luna encouraged anyone receiving questions to share the information that the Dept. of Education had been distributing or refer people to the SDE.idaho.gov website.

CONNECTIVITY UPDATE

Brady Kraft reported that 63 districts have been connected (93 high schools / 37,396 students) and 43 districts are in progress with an anticipated completion date of June 30. Beyond that, 12 districts are still to be started. The original timeline for connectivity covered a three-year period but, in fact, all high schools should be complete in two years. The connection process had taken much longer for some schools in the early stages, Mr Kraft explained that the “bottle necks” occurring in the processes of Qwest and ENA had since been improved upon. Other schools had taken a long time to connect because alternative connection opportunities had become available and required a 60 or 90-day delay. This had been the case for schools connected to Metro Ethernet but the delay in implementation was realizing savings of around \$100K/month. Unexpected obstacles aside, a copper-based connection should take about 45 days and fiber-based connection 120 to 150 days to complete.

Questions and Discussion

Sen. Goedde observed that, if the current education legislation passed, the Coeur d'Alene school district would in four years' time have to provide 3,500 laptops and he queried whether the district's 100Mb of connectivity would be sufficient. As a comparison, Mr Kraft noted that Meridian School District has 11,000 students and 300Mb of bandwidth, however the IEN has been designed for expansion and it is hoped that bandwidth will have to be increased at some point.

Regarding middle schools, Mr Kraft explained that the IEN was connecting to a single distribution point in the district so students in middle schools were accessing the IEN at this time but that bandwidth was not currently being funded with IEN dollars.

Sen. Goedde commented that North Idaho College was frustrated with communication with the IEN. Rep. Jaquet noted she had similar concerns from Carey High School. Following the meeting, Mr Lough institutionalized routine meetings with NIC.

Dr. Reininger noted that although there were districts indicated as not yet being connected to the IEN, this did not necessarily mean those schools were not using online courses – Meridian School District was an example.

CURRICULUM UPDATE

Garry Lough reported that since the previous meeting schools had been between semesters and new classes were about to begin, information regarding curriculum was still being collected. However, he did report that College of Western Idaho (CWI) would be starting a series of classes in the fall. As schools are connected there is a growth in demand for content and more supply is needed which brings greater opportunity for institutions of higher education. The IEN has recently been approached by CISCO who have asked that Idaho be the first state to offer their portfolio of courses via interactive video. Students taking these courses will be able to join the workforce when they leave school.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

In addition to the update regarding the alternative wireless solution, which the Council had already heard, Dr Reininger reported that the Technical Advisory Committee had also heard from Ann Joslin that the Commission for Libraries had received a BTOP grant in August. The Commission was now in the process of rolling out more computer and internet access to 55 of the least connected public libraries in the state and increasing online education opportunities. Ryan Gravette had reported to the Committee that the IDLA had experienced connectivity issues around September and that during the course of their research into why this had happened, they had isolated the IEN traffic. As a result of this, they had discovered that the IEN network is 21% faster than the internet. The Committee had also been updated by Qwest regarding infrastructure changes to their POP on Bannock and by ENA on the previous month's trouble tickets.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Garry Lough commented that origination and proctor training had waned over the December/January period but he had continued to work with community education initiatives such as the Fire Academy in southern Idaho P.O.S.T. Academy training with ITD.

Questions and Discussion

Supt. Luna queried whether the IEN had processes in place for ensuring queries were followed up. Mr Lough assured the Council that the IEN staff has a strong customer service attitude. Attempts are made to reach out to every bureaucratic level of the districts but it can be difficult to know who the champions are.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 1:16 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2011 at 1:00pm in the Barbara Morgan Conference Room of the LBJ Building, 650 West State Street.

Respectfully submitted,



Sally Brevick, Office of the CIO